

superstructure is truly amazing. He pulls out a diagram. Sort of like this bridge I'm building. Go build a kite, says the princess.

Next comes a farmer. Your breasts are melons, your thighs like stalks of corn, he proclaims. Rather poetic, she says, do go on. He scratches his chin. We'll sprout children like beans, live like two peas in a pod. I'm coming down with a bellyache, says the princess. Kindly take your sprouts and scam!

An astronomer appears, studying his notes. Your eyes are stars, your breasts are full moons, he reads. Trite, she says, but continue. Meteors! Constellations! Galaxies! he blurts, so excited he floats off the ground. How uplifting! How cosmic! How boring! says the princess, and he floats out the door, crestfallen.

Next comes a psychiatrist. You're a fascinating maze, says he. I've come to liberate your id. Next case, says the princess.

They keep coming, and talking, talking. Till they sound like bees or the humming of birds' wings.

One day a millionaire arrives with bundles of clinking coins. She grabs his arm, and they're off. It seems she's developed an ear for music

THE JESTER

The jester is gaunt with great, sad eyes. Give me a break, he says to a king, I'm really amusing. The king prods a lady-in-waiting, and jeers. A face like that will keep you unemployed, he says, and the court titters.

The jester moves from kingdom to kingdom, his face growing longer, his wife beginning to nag.

He comes to the court of a good-natured king. I'm a jester, he says, let me do my act. The king nods, and summons the court. The jester does his waltzing chicken routine, surely a foot stomper! But, he looks so mournful quacking, waving his skinny arms, that the entire court begins to weep. Then, the jester begins to weep.

The king blinks. What an idea I have, he blubbers, what vision! And he pronounces the jester official mourner.

From then on, no funeral is complete without the droopy visage of the jester. If there's a lull in the weeping, one has only to look at his face for inspiration.

The jester beams. An audience is an audience he says to his wife

A PARROT

A parrot arrives at a tiny pet shop. An ordinary looking parrot: green and gold with a dash of blue.

His first day at the store, a woman gives him a cracker. "Vous êtes Française?" asks the parrot, and proceeds to speak fluent French with a flawless accent. The woman leaves, pronouncing him "charmant."

The owner gawks! Asks the parrot if he speaks English. "I expect you might say it's my native tongue," says the parrot, slapping his thigh with his wing. It turns out he speaks many languages, including Olde English, Bantu and some Greek.

Great thinkers flock from all over the world to see him. They discuss esthetics, quantum physics, the energy crunch, etcetera.

While having a friendly argument with a Viennese analyst Freud, he notices throngs of people at the window. Kids jam the store, shrieking. Alas, he's become famous, a freak! And no more talks with his interesting friends.

To top it all, a TV crew appears. A ridiculous man shoves a microphone at his beak. Sadly, the parrot looks at the pet shop owner. "Polly want a cracker," he says to the camera. "Cra--cker! Cra--cker! Polly want a cracker!" he squawks.

-- Judith Berke

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GOLDY LOCKS MADONNA: 1

has been in every bed